

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~non-woven~~-wet wipe product comprising a sheet member, pre-wetted with a wet wiping agent, and disposed in a fluid-proof package, the product comprising:

a. ~~a segment of~~ a non-woven self-supporting web comprised of an assemblage of hydroentangled fibers including synthetic thermoplastic strength-providing fibers and absorbent or adsorbent fibers,

b. the non-woven web being in a permanent, dry-creped, heat-set condition defining a succession of ridges and grooves in the overall body of the web, the constituent thermoplastic fibers of the web ~~sheet member~~ having been heat-set simultaneously during the imparting of the ridges and grooves to the web, the heat-set condition of the dry-creped thermoplastic fibers preserving the ridge and groove configuration during ~~prolonged~~ presence in the web of the wet agent,

c. the wet wiping agent being disposed through the body and on the surface of the dry-creped, heat-set web ~~sheet-form member~~ and its constituent fibers.

2. (Currently Amended) A ~~non-woven~~-wet wipe product comprising an adsorbent sheet member in dry state, adapted to be wetted by the user with a wet wiping agent, the product comprising:

a. ~~a segment of~~ a non-woven self-supporting web comprised of an assemblage of fibers, that includes synthetic thermoplastic fibers,

b. the non-woven web being in a permanent, dry-creped, heat-set, volume-enhanced condition, the constituent thermoplastic fibers of the web ~~sheet member~~ having been heat-set simultaneously during the creping of the web, the heat-set condition of the dry-creped thermoplastic fibers preserving the volume-enhanced structure of the assemblage during ~~prolonged~~ presence in the web of the wet agent.

3. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the sheet has been coarsely dry-creped, resulting in a coarse distribution of ridge formations in the sheet.

4. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which there are between about 8 and 25 heat-set ridges per lineal inch of the web (between about 3.1 and 9.8 ridges per linear cm).

5. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which there are between about 8 and 15 heat-set ridges per lineal inch of the web (between about 3.1 and 5.9 ridges per linear cm).

6. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which there are between about 15 and 20 heat-set ridges per lineal inch of the web (between about 5.9 and 7.9 ridges per linear cm).

7. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which there are between about 20 and 25 heat-set ridges per lineal inch of the web (between about 7.9 and 9.8 ridges per linear cm).

8. (Currently Amended) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the web ~~sheet member~~ is comprised of between about 1/3 and 2/3 by weight cellulosic absorbent or

adsorbent fibers and between about 1/3 and 2/3 by weight of synthetic thermoplastic, strength-imparting fibers.

9. (Currently Amended) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the web sheet member comprises about equal weight of cellulosic [[the]]absorbent or adsorbent fibers and the thermoplastic, strength-imparting fibers.

10. (Currently Amended) A wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the web sheet member comprises absorbent fibers that are strength members.

11. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the thermoplastic fibers comprise PET (polyester).

12. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the thermoplastic fibers [[(8)]] comprise polypropylene.

13. (Original) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the thermoplastic fibers are polyethylene.

14. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the absorbent or adsorbent fibers are cellulosic.

15. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 14 in which the cellulosic fibers comprise natural fibers.

16. (Original) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which all of the fibers are thermoplastic.

17. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which absorbent or adsorbent fibers comprise rayon.

18. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 comprising fibers of PET and fibers of wood pulp.

19. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the web comprises a spunlace web.

20. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 in which the wet wiping agent comprises an aqueous agent.

21. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 20 in which the wet wiping agent comprises one of a soap, a detergent, a solvent, a cleaning, a window washing, a sanitizing, a biociding, a polishing, an abrading and a neutralizing agent.

22. (Previously Presented) The wet wipe product of claim 20 in which the wet wiping agent comprises one of an insect repellent, a paint solvent, a paint remover, a finish remover, an oil solvent, a grease solvent, a cosmetic remover, a makeup remover, a stain remover, a stain, a paint, a varnish, a wax and a polish.

23. (Currently Amended) A package comprising a face-to-face stack of a plurality of sheet members, each sheet member comprising:

a. ~~a segment of~~ a non-woven self-supporting web comprised of an assemblage of hydroentangled fibers including synthetic thermoplastic strength-providing fibers and absorbent or adsorbent fibers,

b. the non-woven web being in a permanent, dry-creped, heat-set condition defining a succession of ridges and grooves in the overall body of the web, the constituent

thermoplastic fibers of the sheet member having been heat-set simultaneously during the imparting of the ridges and grooves to the web, the heat-set condition of the dry-creped thermoplastic fibers preserving the ridge and groove configuration during ~~prolonged~~ presence in the web of the wet agent,

c. the wet wiping agent being disposed through the body and on the surface of the dry-creped, heat-set sheet-form member and its constituent fibers.

24. (Currently Amended) A package comprising a face-to-face stack of a plurality of sheet members, each sheet member comprising:

a. ~~a segment of~~ a non-woven self-supporting web comprised of an assemblage of fibers including synthetic thermoplastic fibers

b. the non-woven web being in a permanent, dry-creped, heat-set volume-enhanced condition, ~~condition~~, the constituent thermoplastic fibers of the sheet member having been heat-set simultaneously during the imparting of ridges and grooves to the web, the heat-set condition of the dry-creped thermoplastic fibers capable of preserving the enhanced volume structure of the assemblage during ~~prolonged~~ presence in the web of a ~~the~~ wet agent.

25. (Withdrawn) A method of producing a wet wipe product (22) comprising:

a. providing a self-supporting non-woven assemblage (11, 150) of hydroentangled fibers (8, 9) including synthetic thermoplastic strength-providing fibers (8) and absorbent or adsorbent fibers (9),

b. passing the non-woven assemblage (11, 120, 150) through a dry-creping machine (149) to impart ridges and grooves to a body (30) of the assemblage while simultaneously heating the assemblage to a temperature above the temperature required to heat-set the thermoplastic fibers (8), and

c. thereafter sizing the assemblage into a wipe member (22), pre-applying a wet wiping agent (16) so that the wet wiping agent is disposed through the body (30) and on the

surface of the dry-creped sheet-form member and its constituent fibers (8, 9), and sealing the wipe member in a fluid-tight package (18).

26. (Withdrawn) A method of producing a wet wipe product (22) comprising:
- a. providing a self-supporting non-woven sorbent assemblage (11, 150) of fibers (8, 9) including synthetic fibers (8),
 - b. passing the non-woven assemblage (11, 120, 150) through a dry-creping machine (149) to impart ridges and grooves to a body (30) of the assemblage while simultaneously heating the assemblage to a heat set temperature to heat-set the thermoplastic fibers (8) to thereby enhance the sorbent volume structure of the assemblage, and
 - c. thereafter sizing the assemblage into a wipe member (22).

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20 or 21 in which the dry-creping is performed under conditions to produce coarse dry-crepe.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27 comprising employing a spunlace process for providing the nonwoven assemblage (11, 150).

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27 in which the assemblage (11, 120, 150) is formed by providing a carded web of polyester fibers (8) introducing a layer of wood pulp (9) to the carded web, and subjecting the layer of wood pulp and carded web to hydroentanglement followed by dewatering and drying prior to dry-creping.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27 comprising conducting the dry-creping step with a bladed drycreper comprising a driven roll (152), a pressing surface (154, 155) pressing the fiber assemblage (150) against the driven roll sufficiently to cause the fiber assemblage to be advanced forward, and opposing the advance of the assemblage in the direction of the plane of the assemblage with a retarder blade (156), a tip of which is held adjacent the driven roll, at least

one surface of the drycreper being heated to heat the thermoplastic fiber constituent to heat-set temperature of the thermoplastic fibers.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 in which sorbent fibers (9) in the assemblage comprise wood pulp fibers, the fiber assemblage is substantially free of thermoplastic binder, and the dry-creping is conducted in a manner leaving the wood pulp fibers substantially permanently uncompressed in the direction of the thickness of the assemblage.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 in which the thermoplastic fibers (8) include PET (polyester) and said surface of the drycreper (149) is heated to a temperature above 250° F sufficient to set the thermoplastic fibers.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31 in which the pressing surface (154, 155) is so heated.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 32 in which the driven roll (152) is so heated.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31 in which the driven roll (152) is so heated.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 in which the dry-creping and simultaneous heat setting is carried out under conditions in which the absorbent or adsorbent fibers (9) are substantially uncompressed in a direction of thickness of the web (11, 120, 150) during formation of the dry-crepe.

37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 in which the driven roll (152) of the drycreper includes a continuous cylinder, the roll being equipped with an internal heater (H').

38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 37, wherein the internal heater (H') comprises an electric resistance heater.

39. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 37, wherein the internal heater (H') comprises heat exchange passages containing a hot fluid.

40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39, wherein the hot fluid is one of hot water, steam, hot gas, hot air, combustion gas or oil.

41. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31 in which the dry-creping and simultaneous heat-setting is conducted in a manner to shorten the web (11, 150) at least 4%, increasing a bulk thickness of the sheet member.

42. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 41 in which the dry-creping and simultaneous heat-setting is conducted in a manner to shorten the web (11, 120, 150) within the range between about 4 to 25%.

43. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 41 in which the dry-creping and simultaneous heat-setting is conducted in a manner to shorten the web (11, 120, 150) within the range between about 4 and 12%.

44. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 41 in which the dry-creping and simultaneous heat-setting is conducted in a manner to shorten the web (11, 120, 150) within the range between about 4 and 8%.

45. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30, in which a plurality of said sheet members (22), in a stack (21) in face-to-face contact, are packaged wet in a fluid tight container (18).

46. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 45 including adding to the sheet members (22) before completing the packaging one of a soap, a detergent, a solvent, a cleaning, a window washing, a sanitizing, a biociding, a polishing, an abrading and a neutralizing agent.

47. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 45 including adding to the sheet members (22) before completing the packaging one of an insect repellant, a paint solvent, a paint remover, a finish remover, an oil solvent, a grease solvent, a cosmetic remover, a makeup remover, a stain remover, a stain, a paint, a varnish, a wax and a polish.

48. (Original) The wet wipe product of claim 1 or 2 or the method of claim 26 wherein the fiber content of said nonwoven assemblage comprises at least 20% by weight thermoplastic synthetic fibers.

49. (Currently Amended) The wet wipe product ~~subject~~ of claim 48 in which the web is contacted with a surface heated between about 250° F to 425° F to heat-set ~~heat-set~~ the thermoplastic fibers.

50. (Currently Amended) The wet wipe product ~~subject~~ of claim 49 in which the thermoplastic fibers are polypropylene and the temperature of the surface is between 250 and 300°F, preferably about 270F.

51. (Currently Amended) The wet wipe product ~~subject~~ of claim 49 in which the thermoplastic fibers are polyester and the temperature of the surface is between about 350 and 450°F, preferably about 365F.

52. (Currently Amended) The ~~non-woven~~ wet wipe product of claim 2 or ~~or~~ ~~the method of claim 26~~ in which the nonwoven web comprises a web formed at least in part by entanglement, bonding or adhering.

Applicant : Richard C. Walton et al.
Serial No. : 10/713,900
Filed : November 5, 2002
Page : 11 of 16

Attorney's Docket No.: 02703-023001

53. (Currently Amended) The wet wipe product ~~subject~~ of claim 52 in which the web has been formed at least in part by the process of thermal bonding, chemical bonding, spunbonding, meltblowing, caustic entangling, hydraulically aperturing, hydro-entangling, wet laying, or papermaking.